

A Road to Mental Health Through the Kitchen

December 18, 2014

The Wall Street Journal:

Many cooks know what a sanctuary the kitchen can be.

Now, some health-care clinics and counselors are using cooking or baking as therapy tools for people suffering from depression, anxiety and other mental-health problems.

The courses are often partly aimed at teaching healthy cooking and eating skills to people living tough, chaotic lives. Counselors say the classes also soothe stress, build self-esteem and curb negative thinking by focusing the mind on following a recipe. Often the courses are part of a larger treatment plan that can also including talk therapy or medication.

A Bethlehem, Conn., treatment center for teens uses cooking lessons to help treat mental illness and addiction. The head chef at the clinic, Newport Academy, runs the courses, teaching teens how to make healthier versions of their favorite foods, such as burgers or macaroni and cheese. The chef, Patricia D'Alessio, demonstrates techniques for tasks like chopping vegetables or making meat patties and has the teens follow along with their own ingredients.

Read the whole story: [*The Wall Street Journal*](#)